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A
NARRATIVE

OF THE
SITUATION AND TREATMENT

OF THE
ENGLISH,

ARRESTED BY ORDER OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT AT
THE COMMENCEMENT OF HOSTILITIES;

WITH
THE TRANSACTIONS

On the Arrival of the First Consul at Boulogne, Calais, and
Dunkirk, and, afterwards, down to the End of July :

CONTAINING
*Some secret Anecdotes of Bonaparte's Confidential
Commandant at Calais,*

AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE
AUTHOR'S ESCAPE FROM THENCE
In a Trunk.

BY WILLIAM WRIGHT,
Late English Interpreter to General Brabancon, Commandant at Calais.

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1803.

A NARRATIVE, &c.

SOME recent occurrences, of a particularly-interesting nature *at this period*, have happened in France immediately under my own observation, the Narrative of which will, I apprehend, conduce to the better understanding the temper and disposition of the people towards this country. The authenticity of the relation may be deduced from internal evidence thereof, even though there were not several persons now in London who are mentioned herein, and knew the author to be in the situation he describes himself to have filled. Until very lately, nothing could be heard with more apathy on this side the water than the story of invasion

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vasion ; but I speak from my own knowledge of the spirit of animosity which has been excited in all ranks of French citizens against us, that, should we fail to meet the impending danger with sufficient energy, advantages will be thrown into the enemy's hands, we shall recover only with the utmost difficulty. The following pages, which must be read with great allowances for the inexperience of the writer, furnish another proof, if such were wanting, of the rancour towards Englishmen, the bad faith, and the folly, of *him* who rules republican France.

Intelligence of hostilities being likely to take place between England and France, agitated the minds of every one, more particularly the English who were in France ; for, whether pleasure, curiosity, trade, or necessity, had placed them in that part of the globe, all were in a great degree interested in the event.

The vessels from England in a short time ceased to come, and the mail-packets were the only importers of news we had ; these were anxiously looked for, and from the captain to the lowest on board, teased with questions

questions to which they could give no satisfactory answers : many thought themselves happy to creep into the favour of the captains or mates, to get a glimpse of the state of things on the English side. Day after day thus passed ; a stagnation of trade was the consequence of affairs being so unsettled ; families from all parts of the continent were daily arriving at Calais, on their return, deprecating as it were prophetically the event of a new war.

A report was soon circulated, that the Ambassadors were ordered mutually to return, and a degree of credit appeared attached to it, as two mail-packets were stationed in the harbour to convey our Ambassador and his suite to Dover. The day of his arrival was often fixed, and his non-appearance accounted for by the supposition, that the First Consul had agreed to the propositions of the British Government. Earnestly was such a circumstance wished for by the majority of the French people. “ We wish not for war, (said they) : what have we gained by the last ? What have we gained by the seas of blood which have been spilt ? Nothing, but that most of us have to lament a friend or relative,

tive. That war we fought not, it came to us. Now our rulers will not be at peace, nor let others be so. All the devils out of the infernal regions, were let loose among the unfortunate French at the revolution; and every man, so soon as he gets into power, proves he has a devil revelling in his heart, which urges him to ravage and torture his fellow-creatures."—Such is the language I have repeatedly heard.

Daily, nay hourly, the postilion's whip resounded in Calais' streets, every one hastening to his native land, or waiting at the port of embarkation, the result of what, at that moment, was only suppositious. The hotels, large as they are, were so filled, their owners knew not where to place fresh comers. Many, whose fears overcame every other consideration, hired vessels at any price, and happily saved themselves from an unjust and inhuman captivity.

At length the Ambassador arrived at the Hotel of Dessein, and the same day the town was filled with persons of the first distinction. It was now rumoured the Ambassador would wait at Calais until he received dispatches from the court of London; accordingly,

ingly after a few days the dispatches arrived, and his lordship prepared to fail.

All the French packets and bye-boats were hired by the families in town, but such were the fears of the captains and crews, that none would sail without papers under his lordship's hand: and the day after the departure of the Ambassador, a vessel which had on board the body of Sir Robert Chambers, with baggage, and a carriage, would not proceed on the voyage, although Lady Chambers signed an instrument to pay more than the value of the vessel, with twenty pounds for each day the vessel, or any of the crew were detained after the first three days. The body, baggage, and carriage, were notwithstanding unshipped, and put on board the English Mail, Capt. Sutton.

The departure of the Ambassador was not attended with any marks of respect, by the officers of the town, or by any salute being given; but he took leave as a private gentleman, and although we considered the secretaries' being still in France, as a protection, and affording a glimmering of hope, yet Calais seemed more dreary to every Englishman from the moment of lord Whitworth's

worth's failing. To add to our inquietude two French passage vessels were detained at Dover, and it was stated they were condemned; we dreaded something from the hand of power, but knew not what, if it were true; however, to our joy they arrived the following day with the French Ambassador and his suite with about eighty other passengers.

Hopes were still cherished by the mails passing regularly, and passengers without any other than the usual restrictions of that land of liberty, viz. *passports*! which even a native must have to go from one town to another, and must wait the office hours to obtain, let his business be ever so urgent.

French couriers were also continually passing, sometimes in open boats when the sea was so high as to make it an undertaking of the greatest risque; all these circumstances naturally led every one to suppose active negotiations were carrying on; and what *we wished, too easily we believed*, that all would terminate favourably. Thus were we led on, from one thing to another, to repose confidence in the honour of a treacherous and vindictive government.

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In the early part of the month of May, the English Mail Captain Hammond, and the French Mail failed about four o'clock in the morning, both full of passengers, baggage and carriages, they had but just reached the road, when a boat was dispatched, ordering the French Mail to return, the passengers went on board the English vessel, happy so to escape with the loss of most of their baggage, and some their carriages. Meantime the Prince of Wales Captain Sutton, and the Nancy Captain Latimore, were in port waiting for the secretaries; their crews were called up, a guard placed on the vessels, and about eleven o'clock the same morning, the Captain and Mate of each vessel were put upon their parole, and all the rest sent to prison; although security to any amount was offered for these also to be allowed to remain in the town. The commissary of marine was severely censured for suffering Captain Hammond to escape; and after this period we had no mails but what came as flags of truce, when the Captain was received by a guard, the passports of all passengers strictly examined, and any person found without

one,

one, conducted to Mr. Mengaud the commissary general of police, and probably thence to prison, without regard being had to their country, age, sex, or condition. The Captain and crew were particularly searched for letters or papers, and if found they were taken away, and conveyed to that hectoring bully of Calais, for his perusal, and at his option to be committed to the flames, detained, or sent to the party for whom they were destined.

Our troubles were now about to begin. The reasons I have before stated, induced many to wait the final termination of the negociation, still conceived to be on the tapis; and the firm belief that the French Government would give sufficient time for all to return, urged many not to press the settlement of their affairs, or to hasten their departure; joined to this, the people of Calais behaved so well in every particular, that all were lulled into perfect security for some days, when orders were issued to the officer appointed to receive the passports on entering the town by land, to retain all the passports, and send them to General Brabagon the commandant of Calais; whereas before it

was

was the custom to register the passports at the gate, and give them again to the parties to whom they belonged. About the same time the great man, Mr. Mengaud, either was, or rather pretended to be absent, and no passports could be obtained until he returned; this first step of paltry management created some little uneasiness, still no one imagined what was shortly to happen.

Judge, if possible, the consternation and astonishment which pervaded all ranks, the day the creature Mengaud again became visible, to hear the drum beating in all the principal streets, (the usual way of notifying any thing to the public in France), and the town-serjeant reading the orders, for all Englishmen between the ages of eighteen and sixty, instantly to repair to the general's house. Accordingly, every one went, when having signed his name, mentioned his age, profession, &c. he was politely told, "that in consequence of the English Government having made prizes of many French vessels, previous to their having formally declared war against the Republic, the French Government had decreed, that all the Englishmen within their territories from the age of

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eighteen

eighteen to sixty were prisoners of war on parole ; that those in Calais had that town for their prison ; but if they should have the misfortune to be tempted to pass the gates, they would be ordered into close confinement ; that women, children, the aged, and those who had been patentees* twelve months, were not required to sign their names, and the former were at liberty to go to England, or in fact where they chose.”

Words can but imperfectly paint the state of distraction and distress apparent among the thus-unjustly-made prisoners ; some by this unforeseen event preying upon their spirits, were seriously indisposed ; while indignation burnt in the breast of most, against a Government who in a manner totally unprecedented, rendered captives indiscriminately of the gentleman and servant, the merchant and the mechanic, the tutor

* Every person carrying on any kind of business whatever, must take out a patent ; if a merchant, or more properly a negotiant (as all are merchants in France, even the man who cries vinegar or brooms), he is stated to be in the first class, and pays a certain sum according to his concerns yearly ; others are estimated according to their rental about 10 per cent. and a trifle for fees, stamps, &c.

and the student, who had entered their country under the protection of their laws, and the hand and seal of their ambassador. Such is French faith; such the protection afforded to those who, under the ideas of improving their fortunes by commerce, or their minds by travel, trust to the perfidious guarantee of France; that guarantee, which has been so eminently made to suit the views of its government on a large scale, descends also to the weakest individual within its grasp.

After thus remaining a short time, every one in eager expectation some arrangement would be made for their release, and we had become somewhat more tranquil from that persuasion, information was received we were to be sent to Valenciennes, about one hundred miles from Calais; and again by the drum was it notified all the English must repair to Mengaud's office for passports. Accordingly, those whose finances enabled them to be above suing for favours at the hands of that government which had thus entrapped them; or who had no particular ties to induce a preference of one place beyond another, obtained their passports

ports and departed, some in the barks by the canals, others in cabriolets, coaches, and on horseback; while some of our unfortunate countrymen, who had small incomes sufficient to live in one place, but who could not bear the consequent expences of travelling, and who at Calais had always appeared as gentlemen, actually marched with knapsacks at their backs, (under the dread of being sent to prison by the gendarmerie, or thief-takers, with which they were threatened), after having shared their little stock with their families, which were thus left upon the charity of their countrymen who were patentees, or who were determined not to go till the last extremity. One family, of two brothers, a wife, together with three children, the eldest not more than three years old, the father was unwilling to leave behind, they attempted to carry; after proceeding miserably some way, they were obliged to return, and the wife and children were generously taken into the house of Mr. King, the York Hotel, an Englishman established there upwards of twenty years, and whose humanity to his countrymen has been dangerous to himself

self and family, in the time of the Revolution.

Many were the petitions presented to Mengaud, backed by the interest of the first negotiants in the place. Out of the number, only three were not treated by that worthy representative of the sanguinary Bonaparte, with supercilious contempt, viz. Mr. Impete, a gentleman of fortune, and his family; the other two, single gentlemen, Mr. Lovelace and Mr. Stephenson. The former under the plea of ill health; the latter, as a student in physic. These three petitions were referred to the grand judge at Paris, and they were to wait at Calais for his answer. Various other persons remained under the idea, that a favourable alteration might yet take place; they were, however, allowed very little respite, for again the drum re-sounded in the streets, and damped the spirits of our unfortunate, and too credulous countrymen.

All were once more summoned to the General's house, when they were asked very abruptly, "What is the reason you are not yet gone from this place, according to the orders issued?" Some stated they only wished
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to see their wives and families safe aboard for England ; others, the want of means to depart ; and, in short, most had reasons to give. They were told to return the next day, when the poorer sort were ordered to depart in two days ; and those who could *create*, or pay for friends, were exempted, and suffered to remain. Application had been made by a friend of mine of some consequence in the town, to suffer me also to remain. Permission was granted to that effect, on condition of my acting as interpreter for the general, which procured me no other advantage than the favour I asked, and of course excited the jealousy of my countrymen.* After the first interview, I received orders to make out two lists : one of the poor persons, who I considered were unable to defray the expences of a journey inland ; the other, of those in easier circumstances. I was in hopes the government intended to convey the lower class at its own expence, but it afterwards appeared the

* I often felt my situation to be far from agreeable, as the task I had to perform was invidious in the extreme. However, it gave me an opportunity of observing closely the rapaciousness of a jack in office, and his satellites.

general

general was actuated by a different motive, in thus ascertaining who were possessed of money. All the persons remaining at Calais not having paid a visit to the general the second day, and the third day they appearing rather tardy in coming, the general sent the names of those he conceived were wanting in this mark of respect, to the commandant of the gendarmerie, ordering gens d'armes to search for, and bring before him all the persons mentioned in the list. All were thus publicly brought through the streets, when the same question was put to them in the most severe and austere manner, "Why they were not gone?"—Most had their passports signed by the general to depart the next day; he at the same time declaring, if they were found in the town after the following day, he would commit them to prison, and send them up the country in custody of the gendarmerie, I know of many artificers and manufacturers, who went into France seduced with the promises and hopes of encouragement, that they were absolutely obliged to sell or pledge their tools and cloaths for a mere nothing, to obtain money for their journey, and to pay three

shillings

shillings and four-pence for the passport they were thus forced to take ; and some actually departed from Calais with no more than two shillings in their pockets, therefore were forced to depend on the assistance of their countrymen, who were travelling the same road.

No adequate idea can be formed of the speculation carried on by those placed in office : needy, avaricious, and unprincipled, they, in the most barefaced manner, prey on those who are so unfortunate as to fall within their power. Some instances came within the scope of my knowledge, from the situation I was placed in with the general. One poor gentleman, of the name of Mallison, a cripple, who had repaired to Calais for the benefit of sand-baths, and whose removal to the interior would probably shorten his life, petitioned to remain, as having an abscess removable by no other method in the opinion of his surgeons. I was sent to him, (not immediately from the general, but through his orders) to return him his petition, and to tell him unless he paid ten guineas into the hands of a person named to him he would be sent off. I could not make

an offer of the kind to him, but pointed out to him the person alluded to; and who, I told him, could obtain him the permission so necessary for his health: he settled it with him, I believe, for he was not sent off. Another gentleman, of the name of Patterson, to whom I was also sent, offered two guineas for permission to stay a short time. He was also introduced to this friend of the general's, and five guineas were demanded; this he with proper spirit refused to give, and departed for Valenciennes the next morning.—An English merchant also gave three dozen of the best Bourdeaux wine, value six guineas, to gain permission for himself to go to England, while his brother took care of his house. All these had reason to repent of their credulity, as will appear by the subsequent transactions. French rapacity, and French faith, followed these apparently friendly agreements, and prove that they are as arrant cheats in the detail, as they are in national transactions.

In this manner were our countrymen treated; thus were the ties of consanguinity burst asunder. The parent, who had sent the son to study foreign manners, and thereby

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improve

improve his own, hears of his detention and sinks into the grave denied the prop of declining years; and the son is thus prevented paying the last sad duty to a fond indulgent parent.

The merchant who by extended commerce sought to improve his fortune, is torn from wife, children, and connections, is ruined in circumstances.—Want, and misery are the portion of a family that but for this cruel stroke, might have been happy.

The lover's hopes are blasted, and torturing fancy continually paints to his view the dear idol of his tenderest affections, while anxious doubts and fond alarms, distract his breast: a knowledge of the intended invasion—preparation for the descent and the horrid threats of worse than death, to the justly celebrated beauties of this favoured isle, add agonizing poignancy to his feelings; under the reflection that he is unable to fly, to defend, or of proving his love, by dying in defence of the adored object, of his country and friends.

The sons of glory, whose courage has often made the insolent foe yield the palm of victory, now basely entrapped, doubly feel the

the insults offered to their king, and the threatened destruction of their country ; they burn to revenge their monarch's cause and defend the dear distinction purchased by their own blood, and that of their ancestors. Manufacturers and mechanics, how do they now repent, being seduced by the promises of a faithless government ; in the interior of an enemy's country, reduced from subsisting by honest labour, to living on charity of their unfortunate countrymen ; separated from their families, and never again able to re-visit their native shore, they pine in misery and stand the sad mementoes of the folly of trusting to the protection of *French* laws ; and as a warning to all manufacturers and mechanics, to be content with the comparative affluence their native land affords.

Such were the scenes presenting themselves to view at Calais, similar ones were practised at Boulogne, Dunkirk, St. Omers, and all parts in the vicinity. I am inadequate to the task of describing every scene of wretchedness and misery to which I was witness, and none but those who were actually present, would credit that such could be inflicted by a government calling itself civilized.

The same day that the English were thus dragged through the streets of Calais, by French thief-takers, an engagement took place on the coast, about a league from the town, so clearly discernable, that the holes made by the shot in the sails were visible to the naked eye. Two French gun brigs, the crews having ran them ashore under the protection of the forts, which kept up an incessant fire, trusted to their situation for safety, but when they saw our tars approach in small boats, they forsook their ships, and a detachment from the garrison, who were marched down on the sands, about two hours after the commencement of the engagement, arrived in time to see the triumph of the British arms, the two vessels being gallantly cut out and carried off: although the English balls rolled on the sands and even passed their forts, I heard not of above two persons wounded: in the forts they had some conscripts, who never having seen service, fell down at the noise of every ball that passed.

The intention of Bonaparte to visit Calais, being made known, the inhabitants were repeatedly invited by publications read to them

them and stuck up in the streets, to manifest their joy at the approaching honour, they were further told that from that point should be made the attack on the proud people who daily insulted their coasts, calling to mind their ancestor Eustace St. Pierre, styling the people of Boulogne the brave, and observing what glory they had acquired by the defeat of Nelson. They painted in all the pompous language of the revolution, the faith, honour, and glory of the republic, and its First Consul, ascribing tyranny to our king, want of faith in our government, representing us as a band of pirates, and robbers, and in the end denouncing on our heads, a vengeance which should make all the nations of the earth shudder by its severity. In rather milder terms a succeeding publication desired them to behave with decency and good order, and requested if they knew of any one disaffected to denounce him, or them, for the good of the nation: again in humbler mode the people were addressed, and invited to display flags from their windows, to keep the streets clean, and to illuminate the houses on 9th or 10th of messidor, being the days appointed for the visit, to use their words,

pointed

“ of the greatest man in the world.” Mean-
 time the advanced guard of about two
 hundred and fifty men had arrived on
 fine horses, and good proportioned well
 dressed men; they were quartered in the
 houses of the better sort of inhabitants, and
 behaved with propriety. With them also
 came nine mamalukes, as they are called,
 although in fact, there are not more than
 one quarter of them who are so, the rest
 being slaves. These are armed with a scy-
 metar, a dagger, a brace of pistols in their
 belt, a brace on their saddle, and a short
 fusée; to be admitted into the guard of
 Bonaparte the person must be of the exact
 height of six feet English measure; he must
 have served six years without reproach, and
 in every particular deserve the name of a
 good soldier.

The Town-Hall was decorated with
 boughs of trees, the windows and images
 newly painted, and a range of flags of all
 nations prettily displayed from the balcony
 over the entrance; the market place was
 strewn with fine sand, and all the principal
 streets tastefully adorned with rows of trees,
 made

made artificially with boughs. Festoons and garlands of leaves and flowers lengthways and across were suspended with a pleasing effect; and in some parts of the town white linen neatly bordered with gilt paper, and tied in festoons with flowers, the whole length of the street, added to the appearance of the other decorations.

In the street leading to the church were several triumphal arches, with the temple of concord, and medallions inscribed with the names of those nations, with whom France considers herself at peace; the whole being executed in paper, and that not very neatly, only rendered it an object to be viewed at a distance with any advantage. The gates of the town were also ornamented with wreaths and flowers; an inscription was placed in the street leading to the port "*The Liberty of the Seas*" and over the gate through which the passage lays for embarkation, was "*The Road to London*;" thereby meaning, "*The Road of Bonaparte to London*;" but the writer, a German, contented himself with the first and shortest, probably thinking it also the most true inscription, as it certainly is the road for passengers, but I trust the
 unanimity

unanimity and courage of Britons, will defeat this hostile vaunt, and prevent him ever reaching that emporium of the world, unless indeed as a captive.

From every window depended flags; lines were stretched across the street from window to window, and on these were hung sheets ornamented with gilt and coloured paper, flags of all nations; and bed curtains of all colours, sizes, and sorts, some clean, but more dirty, filled up the motley decorations of Calais streets.

Some of the young men of the town, having provided themselves with dresses and arms, upon the report of the First Consul making this tour twelve months since, again came forward as a guard of honour to receive him, and the morning of the 12th of messidor, the day of his arrival received their flag of light blue silk, a white fringe, the national scarf tied on the top, the two ends serving as tassels, and inscribed in gold letters

BONAPARTE

AMIDST THE DESCENDANTS OF

EUSTACE ST. PIERRE,

12th of Messidor, year 11.

About

About four o'clock in the afternoon arrived this long expected man, he was met at the gates by the officers of the town, where the keys were presented to him. The head of the clergy also attended with a canopy, under which he hoped to introduce him into the town; but Bonaparte noticed him not, and entered in company with the officers of the regiment, and of the municipality. He was attended by about one hundred and fifty guards, mamalukes, &c. and went to the hotel of Dessen; he then, in company with four or five officers of note, one favourite mamaluke near him, and nearly twenty guards, mamalukes, and Gens D'Armes, went on the port, where none were suffered to follow, and in a boat crossed to the Red Fort, at the mouth of the harbour, when having inspected that, and the port, for nearly three hours, he returned to his hotel, the boys and rabble shouting "*vive Bonaparte.*"

So soon as it was dark, in obedience to orders issued in the form of an invitation, all the windows of the first story, had more or less candles, the hotel of Dessen was neatly ornamented with lamps, forming in the front

a star with R. F. above, and “ *vive Bonaparte*” below: the windows of the Town-Hall were filled with candles, and a transparent cypher of N. B. surrounded by lamps was in the middle over the entrance; the house of the mayor was also illuminated with lamps, and an inscription expressive of his attachment and good opinion of his chief.

Balls were given by the municipality at the Town Hall, and two large rooms to the inhabitants; Bonaparte in disguise viewed the town, and some little gallantry took place, by a lady asking him a question, respecting the First Consul visiting the ball.

In the street so neatly decorated with linen, flowers, &c. no lights were displayed from the windows, but festoons of lanthorns made of different coloured paper and oiled, supplied the place and produced a good effect.

At one o'clock most people had quitted the streets, and the candles were out, no symptoms of disorder took place during the whole of the day, or night; but the inhabitants having satisfied their curiosity, retired quietly to their beds.

Bonaparte after a very slight supper, about
twelve

twelve o'clock retired to his room, and continued some time writing; and at four o'clock in the morning was again at the Red Fort, where having remained some time, he returned to his hotel. On his way out in the morning I had an opportunity of noticing his countenance most particularly, as he crossed the market-place. He was advancing with a fullen look, and as he came near the spot I occupied, he seemed to recognise an Englishman, and a storm gathered on his brow, which I wished to shun. At ten he made another visit to the Port, when on his return he was solicited to enter the Town Hall by the Municipality; he dismounted, and staid some considerable time, in the course of which he expressed his satisfaction at the reception he had met with, his high approbation of the Mayor's conduct: and since his departure the Minister has written from Paris, to assure the citizens of Calais no request they can make, which can be complied with, shall ever be denied them.

Whilst the First Consul was at Boulogne an English frigate fired among the workmen, and drove them from their work;

shot were fired in return, but not reaching half way, excited a degree of suspicion, and on weighing cartridges which should contain eight pounds of powder, they were found three pounds deficient; such an act of treachery so enraged him, that with a *ferociousness natural to his character*, he tore the epaulet from the shoulder of the responsible officer, put him in prison, and every one any way concerned with him shared the same fate: finding also the works not executed according to the orders he had given, he broke all the officers in fault, and suspended the operations in hand.

A considerable sum of money was expended to prepare the town of Dunkirk for the reception of Bonaparte; and we understood from thence many English were put in prison during his stay, and afterwards were, as well as those at Boulogne, ordered to quit the coast immediately.

We therefore naturally supposed similar orders would be given to the remaining few at Calais, and so it eventually proved: within two or three days after this little great man's departure, men, women, and children were obliged to visit the general,

when

when patentees pleaded their right as French citizens to remain, those who had been patentees a twelve-month being protected by the French laws from removal as foreigners; and those who had been so seven years, having by those laws the same privileges as natives; but it did not matter, they were indiscriminately told they must sell their property, or remove it with them in a few days.

The same species of protection was given to men who have been established twenty or thirty years in France, all must remove: patentees had the indulgence of not being ostensibly made prisoners of war, but they really were so, as unless they were aged, no permission could be granted for them to return to the country which gave them birth; women, children, and aged, were permitted to have passports for England, and six leagues was the distance from the coast for those who were not in the number sent to Valenciennes, and who wished to remain in the country.

The natives were astonished at the unjust detention of the English, and the subsequent measures of cruelty towards them: it excited pity; but awed as they are by the military,
they

they almost cease to think of their rights as men, much less of the sufferings of foreigners : for the dread of experiencing the repetition of similar scenes of horror they had so lately witnessed, in fighting for a shadow of liberty, deters them from emancipating themselves from a lower state of slavery than they endured in the time of Royalty. The lower, as well as the higher orders among them, say, “ formerly the persons in office being by birth, education, and manners, gentlemen, were civil and courteous in discharge of their duties ; but now how widely different ! those in power support and enrich themselves by extortion of every kind, and the most unprincipled, unfeeling conduct, evidently evince the origin of their manners.”

Happily for the inhabitants of Calais, M. Mengaud is stripped of a great part of his power, and will most probably lose the remainder ; it is now vested in the mayor and corporation. It was a change long seriously wished for, as all persons, whether French or English, were insulted by his language, beat with his hands, cane, or whip, sometimes in his office, in the street, or at the theatre, and afterwards put in prison

prison at his pleasure, without reason or remedy.

From the moment I was so unjustly detained, I determined to escape the first opportunity that presented itself, and to facilitate its execution, I sent my wife and family to England. After their departure I revolved many plans, and at last thought of escaping by means of a trunk; I therefore marked with a pencil the size I could compress myself into, and noting the measure, waited for an opportunity to put it into execution; a fortnight nearly elapsed before a vessel was about to sail, and in that time not being able to hear of those I had sent before me, my anxiety increased to a state unbearable; three other persons opened their minds to me, as wishing also to escape. Being then four, our plan was to take a small boat, and go to sea in the night; finding there was a small boat lying near the pier head with stones in her to repair a broken part in the pier, we resolved to secrete ourselves among the wood work, and drop out with the tide; this however was found impracticable by a centinel's being placed near the spot; and for all four to hide on board of a vessel

was

was impossible, from the search made by the custom-house officers; for large as are the neutral vessels, yet their going out in ballast leaves no place but what is easily explored.

Fully confident I could trust my partners in trouble, I mentioned my plan of a trunk; they did not approve of it; and two, discouraged, gave up all thoughts of effecting their escape at that time, the other depended on being secreted in the vessel, and I determined to act according to my original intention.

As the Danish brig the *St. Anna*, was to sail the following day, I went with a friend to all the dealers in trunks, to find one to my purpose, and curious to relate, was shewn a trunk in which a man had escaped from England; at length my friend bought one as for himself, and on trial it answered very well; holes were made to admit air, and having loosely put my cloaths, &c. in, it was sent to the custom-house with other baggage, and being examined was conveyed on board. Meantime I went down on the port dressed as a sailor, and within ten yards of the vessel overtook the commissary of police,

police, who in war time, attended by the town-serjeants and a guard, takes all the passports. Well knowing if he went on board, it would be impossible for me to effect my purpose, I asked him if he was going on board? He replied in the affirmative. I told him it was too soon, as we had not got all the baggage from the custom-house, and none of the passengers were yet come down; he returned, imagining probably I belonged to the vessel, and I passed the centinel placed at the side, and descended into the cabin. I then ordered my trunk down there, saying it was a gentleman's who desired I would see it placed there; they on board believing I was authorized so to do, instantly lowered it down. The captain being a man I could not trust, it was necessary to have him out of the way; this also was accomplished by a little finesse, when my friend entered and held the cabin door, while I tumbled every thing out of the trunk into a bag I had ready for the purpose, then stripping off my jacket and waistcoat, I leaped in.

Agitated and hurried, not having a moment's time, I could not compress myself sufficiently to allow the trunk to be locked at the first or second trial, and my friend

being terrified, was on the point of quitting me, saying, our lives were forfeited. At that moment, determination enabled me to compress myself as much as possible, and I begged him to jump on the lid, which forced it down, and I was locked up. He had scarcely done so, when the custom-house officers came on board, also the commissary ; when the vessel having undergone the search, joyfully did I hear the order to cast off, and still more happy to feel the vessel under way.

The heat of a very warm day was so increased from my confined situation, as to be scarcely bearable, and the cramp seized my legs in about ten minutes after I was locked in. Great as was the pain, I dared not breathe hard, fearful of being heard ; the pain at last subsided, and from my knees downwards, I lost all sense of feeling, and, even at the moment I am writing, I feel the effects of that confinement.

Well convinced if detected, my life would be sacrificed to their vengeance, under the pretence that I was carrying over intelligence to the English, but in reality as an example to others, and to gratify the avarice of individuals in power, I had made up my mind fully to succeed, or perish in the attempt.

My spirits being so harassed by anxiety, that death would have been far preferable to a state like mine, separated as I was from those so dear to me, for whom and for my country I would again hazard my life, or bleed in defending.

On gaining the Roads, an anchor was let go, to wait for the turn of tide, which runs to the eastward about three hours after high-water, and the wind being westerly would have taken us out of our course for Dover. The key of my trunk had been given to a gentleman on board, who, fearful I should be suffocated, came down into the cabin, and finding by the mark which was the right, opened it in presence of the captain, when I, naturally thinking all was safe, lifted up my head. The captain was terrified beyond expression, as the pilot-boat had not quitted the vessel. However, I got out of my confinement; and, though at first not able to stand, put on another dress. Scarcely had I so done, when the pilots came down into the cabin for their money, one of them the greatest villain in Calais. Another person also came down with them, who knew me at Calais; and, whether I am to attribute to his good offices, the pilot's not giving information respecting me,

or whether it was owing to the pilot's being employed in taking out the passengers of the mail-packet, Captain Dell, which came into the Roads just at this time, I am at a loss to determine. Be it which it may, Providence favoured me ; and, after suffering the most uneasy sensations for two or three hours, the passengers urged the captain to get under weigh ; when, as we were on the point of getting the anchor up, a boat came out of Calais harbour, and made directly for us. It was to me a subject of alarm ; but seeing only three persons, I remained tolerably easy, until we ascertained it was not after me. The boat came aboard just as we were under sail, and there jumped upon deck another unfortunate prisoner, of the name of Estill, now in London. He had walked down on the pier, when two young men, who had been waiting for him seized the opportunity, when no one was observing, of placing their boat so as to receive him : he sprung into it, and was saved. The young man who had performed this friendly office, on his return was denounced ; and, to escape from the death that awaited him, was under the necessity of flying to Dover to save his life. Being an alien, he of course was there stopped ; but applica-

tion being made for his liberation, I have reason to believe he is come to London. His name is Lutz. To Mrs. Ann Putland, of No. 42, Manchester-street, I am indebted for my conveyance to town in her carriage, and for other civilities in a strange place.

I cannot conclude without making a few observations on the sentiments they express concerning the invasion of this country. In the town of Calais, and indeed along the coast, the non-military part of the inhabitants, with the women, are averse to the attempt; but the soldiery and most of the officers, denounce the utmost vengeance they can inflict, and feast their imagination with the hope of plunder and debauch. The comparative affluence of the English peasantry is a subject of continual reflection, they thence infer that every step will afford abundance of riches; the sacking of Ispahan or Seringapatam those repositories of eastern magnificence, could not inspire ideas of greater booty than is expected will be found in London. Most of the general officers encourage this spirit among the troops; if they part, a jest is excited that they may meet next in London. Of our women, both officers and men talk in the most lascivious manner, so as to shock the ears of Englishmen, who feel for the honour of

those most dear to them, and equally disgraceful to the nation to which they belong. Thus fanning the envy, the lust, and the avarice of their men, the officers receive back the breeze, and believing that spontaneous which they themselves created, reckon nothing more certain than the full accomplishment of their purposes and their desires. The conquest of this country is not then, as is falsely represented, a bugbear existing only in the head or the heart of the First Consul; wherever it may have originated scarcely is there a man but burns for the expedition, and is persuaded of ultimate success. Avert it heaven! you, Englishmen, who have property to lose, look to the consequences of supineness and negligence; you that have none, at least you will not submit your wives, your daughters and other female relations to the brutal embrace of Frenchmen? Frenchmen! detested, degraded name, how fallen in the scale of human nature, since you are not only unworthy and incapable of enjoying liberty, but are yourselves the instruments in the hands of a sanguinary monster for imposing his shackles on surrounding nations who would preserve their's.

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